

**BRIEF HISTORY**  
Of  
**PETER CLARK**  
And Service in the  
**SEVENTH PENNSYLVANIA CAVALRY**  
During the  
**WAR OF THE REBELLION**  
**1861 – 1865**

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Peter Clark, the oldest son of Patrick and Mary Ward Clark, lived a hard and lonely life away from his family. He could neither read nor write, and because of these circumstances, not much is known about him. What is known is that he served in the 7<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Cavalry during the United States Civil War. This was a well-known regiment, often called "The Saber Regiment", which fought in the western theatre states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama. From various published documents, along with his military and pension files, the following history has been assembled. Primary focus is on the activities and persons which were part of Companies A and F – about 200 of the "local boys" who were recruited from the Pottsville area. These two companies were almost always deployed together during the war, and the men would have all been well known to each other. Additional details are included for incidents involving "ambulances" – as Peter was assigned as a driver during the final year of the war. Other notable events, experiences, and persons involving the regiment are also mentioned, as he would have been well aware of them as well. Hopefully, the following story will give insight into his life during this memorable period of our history.

## **BRIEF HISTORY OF PETER CLARK AND THE 7<sup>th</sup> PENNSYLVANIA CAVALRY**

**Peter Clark** enlisted as a Private in **Company A** of the **7<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Cavalry**, and served the Union army for the entire four years of the Civil War. He was born in Ireland in 1833, and came to America the next year with his father and mother, Patrick and Mary Ward Clark. The family first settled in Prescott, Maine, where a brother Michael and sister Margaret were born. The family moved to Rhode Island in 1840. Margaret died at ten years old, and Michael married in 1857. Shortly after the marriage of his brother, his mother died. Peter then left his father's home and went to work in the Coal mining area of Pottsville, Pennsylvania (Schuylkill County). He had brown hair, blue eyes, and was 5 foot 8 inches tall. He was not an educated man, (as he believed he was only 20 years old upon enlistment - when he was really 28), and was illiterate, (and thus only able to make a mark "x" for his signature). Meanwhile his father and brother's family migrated west as pioneers and settled in the Rocky Mountains, near the town of Clarkston, in the Cache Valley area, along the northern border of Utah territory.

In July, 1861, William B. Sipes, of Philadelphia, was authorized by the Secretary of War to raise a regiment of Pennsylvania cavalry, and set out to open recruiting stations throughout the state. George C. Wynkoop, of Pottsville, who had served in the Mexican war, and had been a Brigadier General of Volunteers for the first 90 days of the war, was also asked by the Governor to raise a regiment of Cavalry. Being a Pottsville resident, Wynkoop promptly began enlisting volunteers for Company A. Peter Clark would have been one of the first 100 men to volunteer for this company. Soon the efforts of Sipes and Wynkoop were combined and the Seventh Pennsylvania Cavalry regiment was formed (being the 80<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania regiment to form). George Wynkoop was named the first Colonel to command the group, and Mr. Sipes was named Lt. Colonel. Eventually two companies of Pottsville men were enlisted into the 7<sup>th</sup> – Companies A and F. Private Clark mustered-in at Harrisburg on Sept. 15, 1861, where "clothing and side arms for the men were issued as fast as they arrived, and a thorough and systematic course of instruction in dismounted drill, and saber and pistol exercise was continued during the whole time the men lay in camp".

On December 19<sup>th</sup>, the Regiment left for Pittsburg, and hence, on seven steamboats for Louisville, Kentucky, where it arrived on Christmas day of 1861. The men then spent the next month across the river camped near Jeffersonville, Indiana. When the regiment debarked, Lt. Joseph G. Vale described the scene as follows, "a furious rain was falling; the mules were entirely unbroken; the wagons had never been put together before; and the 'bottom had fallen out' of the roads leading from the town to the camping ground; added to these interesting factors, was the fact that the men detailed as teamsters and assistants were absolutely without experience in army transportation, and the lively kind of a circus the regiment treated itself to before it got settled in camp that night may be imagined, but cannot be adequately described. The next morning, it having grown intensely cold during the night, the men had the novel experience of cutting the horses' feet loose from the frozen ground. This freeze was attended with very serious results. The horses had been taken from stables and the more recent warmth and shelter of the cars and boats, and were wholly unprepared for the sudden exposure". Many of them took months to recover, and some never did; about 200 ultimately had to be condemned and turned in as worthless. Here Company A received their sabers, horses, saddles, and initially Belgian rifles (huge .69 caliber, long rifles which required using a ramrod to load) – which guns were promptly pronounced as worthless and universally condemned, one man saying only that, "They will make first rate clubs in case of a close encounter". These guns were replaced before the regiment saw action with the much improved Burnside Carbines (.54 caliber breech-loaders utilizing unique tapered metallic cartridges – in Cos. A [Clark], F, H, G, K & L), and with Smith Carbines (.50 caliber breech-loaded with rubber cartridges inserted into a pivoting barrel – in rest of the Cos.).

On the 26<sup>th</sup> the regiment struck tents, and with a day's cooked rations in haversacks, moved at 8am to the Louisville ferry. Thomas S. Dornblaser relates that "such cheering news from the front made us all the more eager to have a hand in the fray before the fight was all over...The work of packing had to be done in a hurry. Most of our company were excellent horsemen, accustomed to the saddle; but how to pack bed and board, household goods and three day's provender on horseback, was a mystery yet to be solved. To leave anything behind was not once thought of. Two woolen blankets and a coverlet brought from home were hurriedly rolled into a bundle two feet long and a foot thick, which was strapped to the saddle behind; the rubber dolman overcoat, carpet sack with several suits of underclothing, shaving tools, shoe-brush and blacking, and perhaps a sheep-skin, had to be packed in front. The side-pockets, or saddle-bags, were filled with crackers and forty rounds of ammunition. The dragoon (trooper) then girded himself with a heavy cavalry sword; on one shoulder hung a monstrous shooting-iron (.44 caliber Colt Army revolver), and on the other a haversack holding the rations. The horses were led into line, each with a nose-bag dangling on his neck containing a feed of oats, and a weight of 150 pounds on his back. At the command to 'Mount!' the scrambling to get into the saddle was highly amusing to a disinterested spectator. Some sat astride the stern of the ship, but how to get over the rear bundle was the difficulty. Short-legged men had to lead their horses to the nearest fence, and from the top rail drop down amidships...once mounted it was only a question of time as to how we should dismount."

After crossing the ferry to Louisville, which was completed by 11am, the regiment was spread out for over a mile. "Our saddles remained in position very well as long as the column moved at a walk", but as the command was ordered to "close up!", "it was necessary to make a cavalry charge to catch up. As the horses began to gallop, the rigging of the ship and the passenger on the upper deck began to slide backward, notwithstanding the pilot held on to rein and mane for dear life. The sight was indeed ludicrous to the multitudes of spectators (returning from Sunday services) lining the streets on either side. Now and then a saddle would turn earthward toward the centre of gravity, leaving the rider and his bundles, mud-splashed, in the middle of the road. The colored population, which was very dense in the suburbs of the city, enjoyed the performance hugely, and frequently gave expression to their feelings by vociferous outbursts of laughter. This first bloodless charge will never be forgotten..."

Present with the regiment on this occasion, as it marched off for the front, were 1062 officers and men – including teamsters and wagon train guards, with the fifteen wagons and three ambulances. The entire Regiment arrived at Nashville, Tennessee on March 18th, and for the next seven months were divided and detached into three separate "battalions", each receiving different duties and assignments. The cavalry in the "western theatre" was too small at this time to cope with the thousands of confederate cavalry, commanded by the confederate Generals Forrest, Wheeler, Morgan, and Roddy, who were continually hovering around the federal flanks, attacking supply trains, cutting railroad communication, and capturing isolated outposts.

Company A, part of the First battalion (Cos. A,F,D,& I), was sent to Columbia, TN, from whence it operated for most of the summer, making forays and skirmishing at Pulaski, TN, Lamb's Ferry near Rodgersville, Alabama, and over at Sweeden's Cove at the southern end of the Sesquatchie Valley, near Chattanooga. The Battalion occupied Manchester, TN, during July, and ended up in the Nashville area again just at the moment when Confederate General Braxton Bragg began his invasion into Kentucky.

To counter Bragg's advance, Peter Clark and his battalion, were sent to accompany the federal army on its way back up to Louisville. From there they began the chase of Bragg through Bardstown, and Springfield (Abraham Lincoln's boyhood home). Then taking the advance of the army, the battalion followed the line of Bragg's retreat until the evening of October 7<sup>th</sup>. Per Vale, "On approaching Perryville, it developed the rebels in considerable force. Advancing on the 8<sup>th</sup>, it soon became sharply engaged, and demonstrated that Bragg was in

position, determined to fight for the safe passage of his immense trains over the Cumberland river and mountains.” On this date a major battle between the armies took place. According to William B. Sipes, the 7<sup>th</sup> “lost, in thus opening the combat, two men killed, two wounded, and four captured.” One of those captured was private Peter Clark of Company A.

A letter written by George F. Steahlin, to the Pottsville Miner’s Journal (pub.11/1/62) several days after the battle, describes in detail how the 7<sup>th</sup> first became engaged, and actually mentions Peter Clark and his capture: “We arrived three miles on the south-east [south] side of Perryville by 8 o’clock, P.M. [AM!]. McCook’s army corps had engaged the enemy’s right wing early in the morning. As we advanced we heard the loud roar of artillery and the sharp cracking of the musketry. By nine o’clock our line was formed, with Wolford’s Cavalry in the advance. Our battalion supported the artillery. Scarcely was the line complete when we heard our pickets firing. Co. A of our battalion was ordered to take the advance and skirmish. Fifteen minutes later Co. F was ordered to help Co. A (Co. A numbered 36 men, commanded by Lieut. [John D.] Jones). The respective platoons were commanded by Orderly Sergeant [Thomas M.] Price and Peter Kelly. Co. F numbered 28 men commanded by Lieut. Heber S. Thompson. (The 1<sup>st</sup> platoon by Orderly Sergeant George F. Steahlin).”

“Our position was in a ravine. Co. A was deployed under fire at the time we arrived. My platoon was sent to the right. Lieut. Thompson deployed to the left under a heavy fire. Three men and a corporal were sent on the hill in my rear. As my platoon advanced, the rebels poured a volley of musketry over our heads. A gate was reached. Here we halted a second or two. They [rebels] took advantage of the pause by sending a little grapeshot at us just as the last man entered the gate; a few yards more to make, we were safe behind six hay stacks. I dismounted four men to act as sharpshooters. They opened the artillery upon us. We were too low for them to do us any damage, except taking the cap off our hay stack, and blowing the limbs off of the trees behind us, which caused the corporal’s squad to take shelter behind the trees.”

“The skirmishing became general. Ten men of Co. A sheltered themselves behind a house. From there they killed eighteen (18) men and one Major. We had the position for 30 minutes under a galling fire of musketry and artillery. We did too much execution for them, so they prepared a column of cavalry to charge upon us. Our skirmishers on the left could see them preparing. The distance apart was about 150 yards. The [rebel] charge was made. Lieut’s. Jones [with Peter Clark] and Thompson’s men took to the woods with the rebels on their heels. I heard them yell. Gave the order to retreat. As we turned, the artillery opened. A column on my right and left. We would have been captured had I not ordered a man James A. Wilson, (better known as ‘Big Jim’) to open [knock down] the fence behind us. He did not reach his horse; but made good time on foot. The horse followed us. James took shelter under a hay stack. The rebels passed him. Our artillery opened and knocked the haystack over. James was again put *hors du combat*. He came in carrying the colors of the 1<sup>st</sup> Kentucky Cavalry, which they left behind as the rebels charged upon us. [An hour later “Big Jim” was wounded in the right hand]. The 1<sup>st</sup> KY Cavalry behaved anything but bravely. The rebels were close enough to use the saber, and coming near taking two pieces of [our] artillery and three Generals, all caused by the 1<sup>st</sup> KY Cavalry balking. Their Colonel took the lead and begged them to charge, but alas, they turned their backs to the rebels. Our loss was four men taken prisoners, all of Co. A – William Thomas, from Ashland; Martin Cannon from Swatara [who was killed later in the war on 11/22/1864]; **Peter Clark, Pottsville**; and James [John] Bramley, St. Clair [who later deserted]. Fredrick Hammer, from Wasser’s on the Broad Mountain, was wounded in the side, not dangerously. Our bugler, Joseph Partridge, had his horse shot from under him.”

“I have since learned from a prisoner, that we killed about sixty men and wounded some forty. Their force at that point was 5000 cavalry, under General Wharton, late Col. of the Texas Rangers, two regiments of infantry, and one battery of artillery from Louisiana. Our orders were to fall back if pressed too hard. We thought we were doing good service, and would not turn

unless compelled. Our steward heard General Van Cleve remark that we were either ‘fools or heroes’”.

Confederate General Joseph Wheeler, in his report of this incident, stated the following: “About 10 a.m. my pickets on the Perryville and Lebanon road were pressed in by a large body of cavalry, which proved to be the First Kentucky and Seventh Pennsylvania Regiments, which were moving down [northward along] the Lebanon and Perryville road with a large force, partly dismounted, deployed on each side. At this moment, receiving orders from General [Leonidas] Polk to clear that road of the enemy, we charged the enemy, throwing their entire force of cavalry into confusion and putting it to flight. We pursued them at full charge for 2 miles, capturing many prisoners and horses in single combat and driving the remaining under cover of their masses of infantry. ... The charge, one of the most brilliant of the campaign, was made in column; [by] detachments of the First and Third Alabama [Confederate] Cavalry...”

In this battle, known at the time as “Chaplin Hills”, over 1400 men were killed and 5400 wounded – among both sides combined. The Army of the Ohio, under General Don Carlos Buell, won an indecisive victory as the rebels retreated and disappeared to the northeast during the night.

The policy at that time was to Parole or Exchange prisoners within ten days of capture. Clark was sent to Camp Chase, within present-day Columbus, Ohio. Camp Chase was a federal prison for captured confederates, but often the paroled or dismounted union soldiers would serve as guards there while awaiting their exchange or remounts. While he was a prisoner, the 7<sup>th</sup> participated in the major Battle of Stone’s River at Murfreesboro, over New Years eve and day of 1862/63. During severe fighting at this battle, the regimental battle flag was “shot to pieces ... (and) the flag staff was shot completely away...in the hands of the color bearers...”, and in addition, the regiment suffered the capture and burning of its entire baggage train (wagons) by the rebel forces.

Clark was evidently exchanged or returned several months later and rejoined the 7<sup>th</sup> in the Nashville area about March, 1863. However, he remained "sick in quarters" through April (either at camp in Murfreesboro, or at the “convalescent barracks” in Nashville). All three battalions of the 7<sup>th</sup> were once again reunited, becoming part of Colonel Robert H.G. Minty’s brigade. Minty, being a Michigan man, had come up through the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> Michigan cavalry regiments. His command, though he was only a Colonel, now consisted of the 4<sup>th</sup> Michigan, the 7<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania, and the 4<sup>th</sup> United States cavalry regiments. William B. Sipes, was named Colonel over the 7<sup>th</sup> PA regiment itself. During this time General Buell was relieved (primarily as a result of letting Bragg escape from Perryville) and replaced with General William S. Rosecrans. The army was renamed the “Army of the Cumberland.” Command of all the cavalry fell to Generals D.S. Stanley, McCook, and Turchin (with Minty and the 7<sup>th</sup> falling under Turchin – being organized as the First Brigade of the Second Division). Colonel Wynkoop, the founding colonel, was honorably discharged by surgeon's certificate of disability in July, 1863, having suffered from constant rheumatism, and the loss of his eldest son (one of his 13 children) in action at Galatin, TN, while fighting with the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion of the Seventh during the preceding August.

According to Vale, "About this time it was learned that a tremendous furor existed among the rebels in regard to the use, by the Seventh Pennsylvania and the Fourth United States, of ground or sharpened sabers...The rebels insisted that the use of sharpened sabers was barbarous, and contrary to the rules of modern warfare, and threatened instant death to all officers and men captured possessing them. The men, however, were not bothered by such threats, stating that they ‘did not expect to be captured’. In response, the Union commanders promised retaliation in kind. The whole fuss began when some men of the 7<sup>th</sup> PA came across a grindstone while foraging, "and as they had the reputation of taking everything that they could carry, brought it into camp" and after sharpening all of their knives, etc, "concluded that their sabers could likewise be improved." Col Minty, when he discovered this, was concerned that many of the

sabers might be ruined, and so he ordered that all of the regiment's sabers be ground properly and uniformly. Hence the reputation of the "Sharpened Sabers" began.

During these months, "numerous skirmishes took place; some almost amounted to regular battles. The Seventh Pennsylvania Cavalry made several sabre charges; one at Rover, Tenn., January 31, 1863, upon the Seventh Confederate regular cavalry, completely routing them; one into the town of Franklin, Tenn.; one at Eagleville; one at Spring Hill, Tenn., under an expedition commanded by Brigadier-General Phil Sheridan; another at McMinnville, Tenn., and several others. Gen. Rosecrans named the Seventh Pennsylvania Cavalry the 'Sabre Regiment of the Army of the Cumberland.'"

On June 24th, Minty's boys set out on a raid south out of Murfreesboro, skirmishing in continuous heavy rain for days ("the whole valley being cut and trampled into a lake of mud") and on the 27<sup>th</sup>, made a spectacular charge into the town of Shelbyville, TN. Per Vale, when just a few miles north of town, "the Seventh Pennsylvania, taking the advance, charged the work, without deploying, carried it, and routed the enemy. The pursuit was now pressed vigorously; the whole brigade thundering down the pike at a sweeping gallop; until a point three miles from Shelbyville was reached.... Minty now found himself confronting the main line of intrenchments and defenses of Shelbyville...and determined an immediate assault... and ordered a saber charge. Forcing their horses through the tangled abatis as rapidly as possible, the intrenchments were reached." The brigade dashed forward over the ditches and amongst the astonished enemy, who mounted their horses and retreated rapidly into town, as did the artillery. About 300 prisoners were captured at this point.

Here Steahlin, now the 7<sup>th</sup> PA Adjutant, witnessed the following scene: "The dead and wounded along the pike numbered over a hundred. Our loss was but one man, Private Felix Herb, of Company A. I must relate how he was killed at the cedar stockade fence. Herb took two prisoners; they threw up their arms as a signal of surrender, but changed their mind. Not seeing immediate support for Herb, they shot him, the bullet passing through the center of his forehead. While this was going on, Sergeant James A. Wilson ['Big Jim'], of Company F, arrived and shot both the confederates who had shot Herb. I reached the spot just as Wilson shot the second man. Wilson turned towards me, saying, 'Adjutant, the devils shot Felix Herb after they had surrendered, so I made short work of them.'"

Minty learned that he faced Bragg's chief of Cavalry, Major General Joseph Wheeler, who was soon expected to be joined by General Nathan Bedford Forrest. Wheeler opened with eight pieces of artillery from the town square. Minty also brought up artillery to counter and ordered Colonel Sipes and "the Seventh Pennsylvania to charge, in column of fours, the instant after, under cover of smoke, directly up the street and into the town square". The 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion of the 7<sup>th</sup> PA was under Captain Charles C. Davis and consisted of 274 men. Vale describes how they "dashed forward with an impetuosity never before surpassed on any field, and, though the enemy fired their guns with all the rapidity and precision possible, hurling canister in double-shotted charges at and through the dense ranks of the onrushing cavalry, and rained from their long line of supporting cavalry a shower of balls, and pistol and carbine slugs; and, although the gunners stuck to their pieces to the last, the mighty rush of the Seventh could not be stayed, but, yelling like demons, and spurring their horses to the wildest speed, in less than half a minute from the time of starting, they reached the square, and, leaping their horses over the guns, sabered the gunners alongside the pieces, dashed into and cut to pieces the supports, captured three of the guns in their position and routed and drove the whole force of rebel cavalry, five thousand in number, from the town. The Seventh, now joined by men of other regiments, who had caught the contagion of the fight, rushed after in a wild craze of enthusiasm." According to Sipes, "Like a field of grain bending before the wind, the Confederates bent in the retreating race towards Duck river..." where they plunged into the rain-swollen waters to escape. Generals

Wheeler and Martin had to swim their horses across. Steahlin described further, "Still we hardly stopped to look, cutting right cuts, left cuts, front cuts, and rear cuts, making thrusts right, left, and front – dealing death at every blow, until Duck River was reached. We pushed over the bridge, where a dozen confederates were crushed by their two remaining pieces of artillery. At the east [south] end of the bridge stood Sergeant Edward Schutt, of Company A, bare-headed, his long golden hair disheveled, and waving in the breeze, sabre drawn and holding the third piece of artillery. But in the river was one of the most heartrending scenes man ever beheld. The river was high and a strong current flowing, owing to the rain the day before. The banks of the river are very high – at least twenty feet high. Down the precipice leaped the confederate cavalry, on both sides of the bridge, to escape the sabers of the two hundred (men of the 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion). In the stream were hundreds of horses and men struggling to escape. Many horses and men were drowned. Some gained the shore and stood wet and shivering. The sun was down as the last man of the [battalion] returned and reported no enemy to be seen."

The next major action was the Chickamauga and Chattanooga campaign. The 7<sup>th</sup> was the first to encounter the enemy at Chickamauga, on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1863, when Minty's brigade held off the Confederate advance between Pea Vine Creek and Reed's Bridge. The first of all the Union soldier to be killed at the battle of Chickamauga was from the 7<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania; John Ward, of Company F, at about 5:30am on Sept 18th. Steahlin records that, "John Ward had fought in the battles of Perryville, Ky.; Stone's River, Tenn... and in the charge at Shelbyville, Tenn., where he had a hand to hand saber fight with a rebel, whom he killed with the saber. He was but a boy in his teens, a brave, good soldier, of whom Schuylkill County can feel proud."

After skirmishing at Pea Vine Creek, the men began to fall back towards Reed's Bridge, which spanned the Chickamauga river. "Chickamauga" is an Indian word meaning "River of Death", and it certainly was on this occasion. At the time, the river was described as having an irregular serpentine course, ...in general a sluggish stream, about ten feet deep and from seventy-five to one hundred and fifty yards wide, with either steep and rocky, or low, swampy banks". (Today the river at the Reed bridge site is about three feet deep and about twenty-five to thirty yards wide, and not very swift.) As the men fell back towards the west near the bridge, there was some hard fighting to do. Per Sipes, "The Seventh and the Fourth Michigan made a grand saber charge on a large force of the enemy, hewing them down by the score", while the Chicago Board of Trade Battery of artillery, also assigned to Minty's command, supported them – still on the east side of the bridge. Finally the whole rebel army, "swarming by the thousands," began to envelope the gallant defenders, and they retreated across the narrow, rickety bridge, only two abreast, crossing in the nick of time and forming on the high ground along the west bank. The 4<sup>th</sup> US were the last to cross, and the last few men stopped to tear up some of the planks under a murderous artillery fire. Minty then disputed the Confederate crossing of the bridge for another two hours. All of this delay, in the final analysis, allowed nearly an extra day for the rest of the Union army, under Rosecrans, to establish their position for the main battle to follow.

A horrible incident of the battle at Reed's bridge was relayed by some of the participants of this fight. Along the road, and about 150 yards east of the bridge, stood the house of Mrs. Reed, who lived there with two or three children. Minty had been camped near here and had been kindly treated by Mrs. Reed. As the cavalry was being forced back past the house and towards the bridge, Col. Minty, and several other staff officers, "urged her, in the strongest terms, to take her children across the creek out of danger. She most determinedly and emphatically refused, said she was not afraid...and that she would resist any effort to take her away by force....nor would she remain inside, but was continually out viewing the scene." As the federals had to retreat, and as the rebels approached, she rushed out to the road yelling, "You Yanks are running! Our army is coming! Our friends will not hurt me", etc. Just then a rebel battery, getting into a position to sweep the road with an enfilading fire between her house and the bridge, opened up within no more than 200 yards away, "and with the first discharge, some

of their missiles struck and laid her a mangled corpse in front of her door. What became of her children we never learned.”

In the battle of Chickamauga, the combined federal and rebel casualties totaled over 4000 killed, over 24,000 wounded, and over 6000 missing. Peter Clark would have been there at the opening of this battle. His family out west, had received word later of his participation in this battle. Since this was the last they ever knew or heard of Peter, and without any future communication or correspondence, they believed he had been one of the killed, either here or in subsequent fighting.

However, contrary to what his family always believed, Clark did survive this battle, and the Regiment next moved to Maysville, Alabama, where it stayed for a month. Then it moved over to Huntsville, AL for the winter. Thus ended a long campaign, and the men's arms, equipment and clothing were becoming sadly deficient and reduced to rags from the months of hard service. The 7<sup>th</sup> PA and 4<sup>th</sup> MI were ordered to turn in their horses and equipment, and serve dismounted while awaiting a re-issue. Most of this time the 7<sup>th</sup> PA was engaged in guarding the railroad to Columbia, TN. At this point, the troopers were mustered out, and almost all of them re-enlisted as “Veteran Volunteers”, and were allowed to go home to Pennsylvania on a 30-day "veteran furlough". Muster rolls show Clark was “present” throughout this time, and having no family to return to, may not have traveled on furlough. Though he was only “age 20” two years earlier, he now stated his age as “28” (was he "feeling" closer to his actual age of 30?).

When the men of the 7<sup>th</sup> re-united in Nashville, they were joined by several new recruits, restoring the regiment to full strength. At this time all Companies received the new Spencer carbines, called "seven shooters" because they could hold seven metallic cartridges, and which became the most popular carbine in the war. The men also received new saddles. Also at this time, Peter Clark was made a "Brigade Ambulance Driver, by order of Col. Minty", and placed on detached service with the newly-organized Ambulance Corps. In addition to a driver, each ambulance was manned by two other privates to carry, and care for, the sick or wounded who were to be transported. The ambulance wagons were very fragile, with large leaf springs to soften the ride, and cushions and roof covers to comfort the passengers. Peter would have been armed only with a Colt Army revolver sidearm. In this capacity he served throughout the Georgia campaign, shadowing just at the rear of the 7<sup>th</sup>'s every move, through Rome, Kingston, Dallas, Allatoona, Big Shanty, Kennesaw Mountain, Marietta, Roswell, Decatur, and Atlanta – the regiment having many interesting rebel encounters in all of these places.

While leaving the Nashville and Columbia areas en route to Georgia, Vale relates a humorous incident that occurred. A Lieutenant Sullivan (4<sup>th</sup> US Adjutant) was mistakenly arrested by order of General Gerrard for drunkenness on the march. His saddle having come loose during the march, he "dismounted alongside the passing column to adjust it and fasten the girths; his horse was very meddlesome, and becoming restless had forced the lieutenant into the road; and in the effort to control the horse...his hat had been knocked off into the mud, and stooping down, still holding his horse, the passing troopers had splashed him, completely covering his clothes with mud, ...his face and hair, as well as his clothing, were well plastered. Now, the lieutenant was very proud of his appearance, and had on his dress-suit...and was rather inclined to let his angry passions rise... hence he got mad, and the longer he got splashed the madder he got. The men of the Fourth Michigan, who were passing at the time, rather liked to torment an officer, particularly of the (US) regulars, when they could do so with impunity; so, instead of riding out of the way, or assisting him to control his horse, they rode as close to him as they could, splashing and laughing at him all the while. Of course, he swore like a 'regular' always did, and finally got so insanely angry that he stood in the middle of the road, up to his knees in...mud, shaking his fists and swearing at every one who passed." Many were convinced he was drunk and when the General and his staff came along just in the rear of the 4<sup>th</sup> MI...”he



let out on them in the same fashion". The general put him under arrest, but a trial eventually discovered the "mistake".

A similar humorous incident occurred after the command was deep into Georgia, on May 25, 1864, when they were ordered to make a night attack near Dallas. Per Vale, "The men of Minty's brigade never took kindly to and were particularly averse to night operations. On this occasion, while marching quietly along the road, without any grumbling, or even ordinary talking being noticed, it was found that a large number of men were riding through the column inquiring, in low tones, for their commands; always announcing themselves as members of companies and regiments different from the one with which they happened to be. The contagion spread rapidly all along the column, until an investigation disclosed the fact that not a single company or regiment maintained its organization. That while the company and regimental officers had each his proper number of men in place in the column, they were strangers to them and to each other. It was the quiet, and while seemingly innocent and orderly, yet most emphatic and effective protest of the men against a night attack or battle. The column was halted, held mounted on the road, and the division and brigade staffs, with regimental officers, carefully selected the men, one at a time, and restored them to their places. It was an intensely dark night, and this work of restoring military order was difficult and tedious. After the ranks were restored, the column again moved forward, under special instructions to keep in place and well closed up; but had not gone half a mile when every officer found himself deserted by his own command, and his ranks filled again with strangers....It was a situation novel...and one for which the 'rules and regulations of the army' provided no redress....So the General (Gerrard)...ordered a halt, and went into camp; when lo! The tangle unraveled itself as quickly and as orderly as it had occurred. Oh! You orderly, mischievous rascals of the old Second division!"

"On the 9<sup>th</sup> of July, the First and Third brigades crossed the Chattahoochee river in the face of, and under fire from, the enemy, by wading it, while skirmishing, from shore to shore....As before stated, the brigade, in fact the whole division, was armed with the Spencer repeating rifle and carbine, using a metallic water-proof cartridge...As the rebel bullets began to splash around pretty thick, the boys sought to keep in the deep water with only the head exposed; they soon discovered that they could throw the cartridge from the magazine into the chamber of the piece, by working the lever, as well under water as in the air; hence all along the line you could see men bring their guns up, let the water run from the muzzle a moment, then taking a quick aim fire his piece and pop down again, with only his head exposed. Now, the rebels had never seen anything like this before, nor, for that matter, had we, and their astonishment knew no bounds. We could hear them yelling to each other, "Look at them Yankee S\_\_\_ o\_ B\_\_\_s, loading their guns underwater!" "What sort of critters be they, any how?" "It's no use to fit agin fellus that'll dive down to the bottom of the rivah an git that powdah and ball," &c.,&c.,&c.; their curiosity so far got the better of their devotion to the 'cause' that nearly the whole line, something over two hundred in number, remained on the bank, quit firing, and surrendered as soon as we got on the south side, anxious only to see the guns that could be loaded and fired under water."

Still another humorous incident occurred near Atlanta. Vale continues, "In one of our scouting expeditions up the river...we had halted overnight near a plantation house, where there were a large number of skeps of bees. Now, the boys always liked honey, and the labor of those bees was not only appropriated, but their future usefulness as honey-producing colonies sadly marred. We started the next morning on the march before daylight, and some of the Seventh Pennsylvania boys contrived to get a forage bag over one of the hives, thus securing both bees and honey for future use, smuggled it into the column, and by supporting it on the horse in front, relieving each other in turns, and having it covered with an overcoat or something of the kind, carried it along until well into the forenoon. Somehow, on the march, the bag worked off the end of the hive, and the bees maddened by the jolting and the confinement, rushed out in an angry swarm, attacking indiscriminately officers, men, and horses...But by getting far enough away

from the hive, now left by the purloiners in the middle of the road, after a good deal of scare, and a good many 'stings and arrows of outraged fortune', the column renewed its march in pretty fair order. The only casualties noted, and that on the quartermaster's report of company G ... was "one horse stung to death by bees". This was the literal fact. The bees seemed to center on one particular horse of that company, and absolutely stung him to death."

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, 1864, the First and Third brigades, sending their horses to the rear, entered the trenches in front of Atlanta, during William Tecumseh Sherman's siege, occupying the portion northeast of the city near Decatur, in relief of an infantry regiment. Here they remained in the trenches and rifle pits for over two weeks. Peter Clark was probably in the rear with the horses, mules, wagons, and ambulances during this time.

Perhaps the most interesting event was General Hugh Judson Kilpatrick's raid around the city of Atlanta (August 18-22, 1864); an attempt to cut railroads and supply lines into the besieged city. Kilpatrick had the nickname of "Kill-Cavalry", due to his reputation of aggressively using that branch of the service. The expedition started out near Decatur (NE Atlanta) and marched around the north, and down along the west side of Atlanta. After marching all night, as the day began to break, the column of nearly 4800 men, being miles long, was attacked outside of Fairburn, near Red Oak Church (SW of city, and about 3 miles west of present Hartsfield airport). The rebels attacked with artillery, being posted on the hills east of the column and parallel to the line of march, near the end of the column, right where the six brigade ambulances and pack mules were traveling. The rebels were supported by a brigade of mounted infantry, who approached to within 200 yards of the federal column. According to Captain Burns of the 4<sup>th</sup> MI, "Ambulance drivers bolted for the woods...(and) Three ambulances were smashed to pieces", before the troopers came back to drive off the attackers. Colonel Minty flatly reported that "I lost 3 ambulances, which were driven into the woods by the drivers and broken."

Of the same incident, Vale recorded, "one of the ambulance drivers, Wilson H. Smith, (known as 'Limerick'), finding the shells bursting over and around him, attempted to run the fire and join the column; two other ambulances followed this one, drawing upon themselves the fire of several of the guns. 'Limerick' took to the woods on the right of the road, and, putting his mules to the run, forced his way through, but with a very badly used up ambulance. In fact, he brought out with him very little more than the mules, harness, running-gear, and the badly smashed body of the vehicle; the (roof) bows, cover, seats, cushions, &c., being left behind. The second ambulance kept to the road, and got through with numerous bullet holes and slightly shattered by a shell. The other one was wrecked in the woods.

Major Mix of the 4<sup>th</sup> MI goes into much more pointed detail... "At daylight on the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> [August 1864], when near the [Atlanta and West Point] railroad, artillery was distinctly heard in our front, and, by the movements of the advance, I learned the enemy were firing into our flank. The ambulances of the brigade were in advance of me, and attempted to follow the command and to dash past the fire (and could have done so but for the mismanagement on the part of the officer having them in charge). Instead of following the command, they turned to the right into a small bridle path. I had followed them to this point, and felt bound to save them, if possible, and accordingly moved my command in the same direction. After proceeding a short distance, I found the ambulances halted and no opening for them to escape, and that we were cut off from the rest of the command. I sent the ambulances to the rear, and formed the Third Battalion... on the left of the path facing the main road, which we had just left. ... The enemy [mounted infantry] were moving toward the main road, and had already opened a heavy fire upon us."

After fighting and regaining possession of the road, Major Mix continues, "I sent my adjutant (Lieutenant Dickinson) to the ambulances to have them fall in between the First and Second Battalions, as to charge out with us, as the enemy had full command of the road with his

artillery. But no one could be found to take charge of them, some of them having been turned over and broken.” Leaving them behind, the 4<sup>th</sup> MI moved ahead to rejoin the rest of the command. Later when the enemy disappeared, he sent a company “back to find our pack mules (which had been cut off), and see if the ambulances could be found and brought out”. They “soon returned with the pack animals and three of the ambulances, the other three having been broken.” Concluding this episode he reported, “And here let me say that with proper management, or with some one to look after them, the ambulances could all have been brought out; but some of the drivers acted in a cowardly and un-soldierly manner, having abandoned their teams on the first appearance of danger.” Peter Clark was very likely one of the ambulance drivers involved in this incident (but its unknown how he behaved).

During this action, Dornblaser describes one of the deep-felt casualties, “Among those wounded was the bugler of our regiment, a fair curly-haired boy”. [This was Orin J. Wilson, of Company G]. “He was mortally wounded in the abdomen, but he remained in the saddle until the column halted in the open field. The pain became so severe that he could no longer sit on his horse. He requested us to place him in an ambulance. The officer in charge refused to receive him, as he could live but a short time. They had room only for such of the wounded who would likely recover. With a look of sadness, he said, ‘Then will you leave me to die in the hands of the enemy?’ Three of us carried him to a little white church by the roadside [Red Oak church], and made a bed for him on the outside, as comfortable as we could. The thought that he must die in the hands of his foes was terrible to him. He had exhibited a great courage in battle. A number of times we saw him at the head of his regiment in the ‘bloody charge.’ He was not afraid to face death, but to die in the hands of his enemies was more than he could well endure. He was just such a boy as would be the idol of a fond mother. He longed for his mother. ‘Oh! If mother knew *this*, how soon she would come to me.’ His last words to us, were, ‘Please write to my mother, and tell her all about it.’ A score of years have passed since this event occurred, but the scene at the little church comes back to my memory as a picture of indescribable sadness and pity.” For nearly three years, the 7<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Cavalry had maneuvered together at the call of his bugle, but now his tones were lost to history.

The column continued on, fighting their way eastward across the Flint river and into Jonesboro (south of Atlanta) at about midnight, setting fire to the buildings (and about two-thirds of the town), burning the railroad depot, perforating the town water tank, and tearing up several miles of track. As rebel forces began to approach from Atlanta, the column began maneuvering their way about five miles southeast towards McDonough, where they stopped to rest horses and eat crackers and coffee. As the rebels approached in pursuit, the Kilpatrick army then turned southwest towards Lovejoy station, which they approached after daybreak. Major Mix described how as they left Jonesboro, "before us was darkness and rebels; behind, the burning buildings and smoking ruins. It also began to thunder, and lightning, and pour down rain. All this time... General Kilpatrick had one of his bands close behind us playing Yankee Doodle, Hail Columbia, and other airs, very provoking to rebel ears."

As Vale relates, "The main column moved on the direct road toward the station, and when within about a mile of it the advance guard – a battalion of the Seventh Pennsylvania, under Major Dartt – became heavily engaged. The woods on the roadside were very thick, and it being desirable to get on the railroad as soon as possible, the head of the column was pushed more rapidly than the dismounted skirmishers could clear the flanks, so that when about a half a mile from the station the mounted column had several hundred yards of flank exposed and unprotected." At this point, the rebel infantry arose from the railroad cut running parallel nearby, and delivered a volley which crashed through the ranks. The 7<sup>th</sup> PA immediately dismounted and drove the enemy back to the railroad, where another brigade of rebel infantry rose from the embankment and delivered an oblique fire, raking the federals from left to right, and then with fixed bayonets, rose up and charged the dismounted troopers. After each emptying their seven

cartridges, the cavalry had to fall back in utter defeat and badly cut to pieces. Minty's boys had found themselves pitted against Confederate general Patrick Cleyburn's famous division of infantry!

At this same time, the rear was also being engaged (to the east) and Kilpatrick's force soon found themselves surrounded. The General now directed the whole force to mount, and form facing to the rear (eastward), and to make a saber charge to break out, with Colonel Minty and his division in the lead. Sounding the "Charge!", "The rattle of sabers mingled with that of the mess-kettles and frying-pans that jingled at the side of the pack-mule brigade, which were madly pushed forward by the frightened darkies who straddled them" ... When the columns showed themselves, the enemy opened with shell from four pieces of artillery in the front, and six pieces off to the right. "Through this storm of shell, canister, and musketry, the charging columns... swept over the fields, broken though the ground was with deep gullies or washouts, leaping over three sets of out-lying rail barricades...and reached the rebel line....where with their keen blades, the brigade in an instant cut the rebel front line to pieces!...and assailed with renewed vigor their second line....and sabered it to pieces as quickly as they had the first! The third line now broke and ran in utter confusion and rout, but we were soon among them, riding down and sabering hundreds as they ran...and dashed upon the artillery, sabering the gunners beside their pieces..." Others described how "the ground fairly trembled" under the tread of thousands of horses.

A Cincinnati correspondent who was present, described how, "The heads and limbs of some of the rebels were actually severed from their bodies, the head of a rider falling on one side of the horse, the lifeless trunk on the other...when the men came out, more than half the sabers were stained with human blood." One such incident, related by Surgeon John Sherk, involved a private Samuel Waters, of Company F, who, "rode upon a rebel cavalryman who threw up his hand to guard the blow. The saber came down, severing the hand from the arm. Another blow followed quickly,...upon the neck, and over the rebel rolled out of his saddle, the neck only clinging to the body by a thin fiber."

Along with the dash, the charging brigade "made a road for the remainder of the command to pass out, which it did in safety, artillery, ambulances, pack mules and all." The race and slaughter among the fleeing rebels was continued for three miles,... "where they were soon among the (rebel) led horses of the dismounted men in the rear, and among the ambulances, which were collected together in a disorganized body in the road. A perfect stampede took place", or a general "skedaddle". Soon after, Minty halted and reformed his command, as the "ambulances were loaded with wounded, and the horses of the command very much fatigued."

"A heavy rain began soon after, and continued in tremendous showers all night, through which, and the deep splashing mud [they] marched, passing through McDonough about midnight," in utter exhaustion. Soon, the weary expedition continued on, where at 6am it reached the rain-swollen Cotton River. The crossing was remembered by all, and as Vale relates: "we reached the south bank of the Cotton river, which now swollen to an enormous height, had swept away the bridge. In the course of a couple hours, the waters subsided sufficiently to enable the command to cross by swimming the horses over a swift, though narrow, channel. In this crossing, the First brigade lost one man and fifty horses, and nearly all of the pack-mules drowned. All the cooking and mess-kits of the companies were lost." As captain Robert Burns described, "We had a terrible time crossing it...A good many men who had gone through the fighting bravely, dreaded to enter that stream. We lost two wagons and one ambulance. It was almost heart-rending to see the poor wounded fellows carried across. Some were fastened on horses, while others were carried over in ambulances. I saw one, with three in it, tip over, fill with water, and go down the stream. However, the men were all rescued. I shall never forget crossing Cotton river."

The great raid around Atlanta ended safely, as the command made its way north to Lithonia, and the next day back to its Decatur camp on Peach Tree creek. However, the men had been almost completely without sleep or food for four days! Additionally, the expedition was very costly to Minty's command. Killed were 33, Wounded 98, and missing or captured about 75 – an aggregate loss of 206 men – its worst casualty cost of the war.

An interesting story concerns one of the 7<sup>th</sup> PA men who was captured during the Atlanta campaign. Phil Rafferty, an Irishman from Company A (one of Peter Clark's fellows), was a "noted character in the brigade". He was captured and sent to the notorious Andersonville prison, in southern Georgia – after the parole and exchange system was abolished. According to Vale, "On one occasion he was with a party of prisoners who were taken outside the stockade, to perform some fatigue duty. Besides the guard, there were a number of bloodhounds along. Rafferty had picked up a stick, and as one of the hounds passed him, he struck it on the head and killed it. A moment later General Winder passed, and seeing the dog lying dead, asked, with an oath: 'Who killed that dog?' No one answered, and he ordered the entire squad to be placed under special guard, and given nothing to eat until the culprit should be identified. This was too much for Rafferty, so stepping out of the ranks, he said: 'I don't want my comrades to suffer on my account. I killed the brute.' Winder demanded: 'Why did you kill it?' Rafferty, in his comical manner, replied: 'I was hungry, and wanted to eat it.' This made Winder furious. After a volley of oaths and a string of abuse, he said: 'By God, you shall eat it!' Rafferty was placed, under guard, at the foot of a tree, in which the carcass of the dog was hung, and he was kept there, without other food, until he had eaten the last scrap of the dog. He was not allowed any fire, and had to eat it raw."

With the surrender of Atlanta, the 7<sup>th</sup> moved back northward, following the movements of CSA General Hood. Throughout this campaign, when cavalry men became dismounted, disarmed, or ill, they were sent back up to Columbia, TN, where they might be put to work building forts and stockades, or guarding block-houses at bridges and along the railroad. But in November, the entire Regiment was ordered up to Louisville, KY, for re-fitting. Over a month was spent here, in frustration, trying to obtain fresh horses. Finally, in order to make progress, an order was issued for the "impressment" or penning and seizure of all the horses in Louisville. The 4<sup>th</sup> MI placed pickets on all the roads, and were told to allow all horses into town, but to allow none to go out. The 7<sup>th</sup> PA and 3<sup>rd</sup> OH were sent throughout the city to seize every serviceable horse they could find. "When the citizens found out what was going on, they were in a 'piece of mind' about it, and attempted to hide all the horses they could. Horses were taken out of stables, street-cars, wagons, and busses; and in the afternoon they were found in cellars, parlors, garrets, and all sorts of out-of-the-way places, where their owners had hidden them. When the impressment was completed, we had some of the most valuable horses in Kentucky tied to our picket lines. For the first day or two, the owners used to come to brigade headquarters with all sorts of reasons for returning animals to them, but it could not be done. Then they sent their wives and daughters, who besought us, with tears, to return the horse 'which had been in the family for fifteen years!' 'The one which poor papa gave me when I was a little girl, and which is good for nothing except for a lady!' &c...and we had to steel our hearts to prevent them from stealing them back," wrote Vale. Also, during the December refitting, Col. Sipes resigned from the service, and Charles C. McCormick was named the third and final regimental colonel of the old Seventh.

Vale continues, "A large number of recruits were sent to the different regiments, and arrived during this time. The Seventh Pennsylvania, being in great favor, was filled to the maximum, and had nearly two hundred men surplus, who were carried on the rolls as 'unassigned'. Among these recruits of this regiment was a sort of polished rough from Philadelphia, who was continually 'pulled in' by the provost guard. He was sometimes discovered dressed as a citizen, sometimes as a private, and again as an officer. One night, or rather

morning, he was discovered down town as a full-fledged lieutenant colonel. Being brought, the next morning, before Lt. Col Seibert, then commanding the regiment, he (Seibert) asked him where he got that coat. 'I bought it in Philadelphia,' was answered. 'Guard,' called out Seibert, 'take that coat from him and lay it on that fire,' pointing to a fire in front of his quarters. The guard did so, and a smell of burning woolen was soon wafted over the camp. At the hour of 'dress parade,' Lieutenant Colonel Seibert went to his tent to get his dress coat, but no dress coat was there. It then dawned on his mind that a fifty-dollar lieutenant colonel's dress coat, shoulder-straps, and all, had that morning been burned, by his order, in front of his quarters. The colonel swore, and the field and staff [officers] laughed at him for months."

On December 28, 1864, the boys of the Second division left Louisville – and for Peter Clark it would have been for the third time. Everyone sensed that the "rebellion" was faltering, and felt that if they returned again it would be to go home. But while encamped near Bardstown, two officers of the 7<sup>th</sup> were murdered about a mile outside of camp, in a house belonging to a Mrs. Grigsby. Captain R.L.McCormick (Co G, 7<sup>th</sup> PA) and Dr.J.L.Sherk (Surgeon, 7<sup>th</sup> PA) were calling on the family, to renew acquaintances gained from the kindness shown to the regiment two years earlier, when suddenly the home was rushed by a band of about 15-20 rebel "guerrillas", who entered through doors and windows while the two listened to Mrs. Grigsby's daughter play the piano in the parlor. They immediately started shooting, despite the pleas of the Grigsbys, and the defenseless McCormick and Sherk were killed. "Thus were two of the brave men of the old Keystone State deliberately, and in perfect cold-blooded fiendishness, murdered by the boasted 'chivalry' of Kentucky..." The leader of this murdering guerilla band, the notorious Sue Munday, was later caught and hanged in Louisville.

During the early part of 1865, the Regiment was sent to Gravelly Springs in northwest Alabama, (at Chickasaw, near Waterloo) where they stayed for two months. They then became part of Major General James Wilson's Division of the Mississippi. On March 12<sup>th</sup>, the famous "Wilson's Raid" was launched, with the greatest cavalry body ever assembled, consisting of 10,000 mounted and armed troopers, another 2000 dismounted men, and accompanied by twenty pieces of artillery, a pontoon train of fifty wagons, and 150 other wagons filled with ammunition and supplies. Starting at the northwest corner of the state, the army moved southeasterly through Jasper, and towards Birmingham, and then southward to the approaches of Selma, a rebel stronghold. At Selma, the elaborate fortifications extended around the entire city, except for the river front along its southern edge. All of these defensive forces were commanded by General Nathan Bedford Forrest, the arch-enemy confederate cavalry officer. The general assault on the town began about 3pm on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, with Minty's brigade attacking the works dismounted, from the north, moving down the Summerville (Summerfield) road. All the while, the rebel defenders and artillery poured deadly fire into the on-rushing federals. After finally breaking through the defenses they routed the rebels, who "first by scores, then by hundreds, and in a few moments, by regiments, threw down their arms, and amid loud cries of, 'We are conscripts!' 'For God's sake, Yanks, don't butcher us all!' etc., they surrendered where they lay, but few attempting to escape. In the town, the streets were choked with horses, soldiers, and citizens, hurrying wildly to and fro. Clouds of dust rose, and it was difficult to distinguish friend from foe. From the houses came the wails and lamentations of terrified women and children, about to be left to the tender mercies of a storming enemy." Major Greeno, 7<sup>th</sup> PA, with about fifty men, made the final attack through the streets and captured the last defense of the rebels, a line of cotton-bale breast-works at the railroad depot, after dark. Dornblaser wrote that, "we never saw our boys so wrought up with the excitement of battle, and the unrestrained joy of victory. They laughed, they shouted, they clapped their hands for joy! Comrades met, clasped hands, wept, and blessed God that so many were safe!"

However, there was a stiff price paid; of the 33 officers and 671 men of Minty's brigade which made the assault, 9 officers and 114 men were killed or wounded (the 7<sup>th</sup> PA regiment

itself losing 25% of the men engaged, killed or wounded). Scarcely a man of either the Seventh Pennsylvania or Fourth Ohio did not receive either a wound or bullet holes through his clothing. "More than two hundred carbines were struck by the enemy's missiles and shattered to pieces in the hands of the men." Sadly, the regimental color-bearer for the past three and a half years, Sgt. John A. Ennis, an Englishman and fellow member of Company A, was killed carrying the colors onto the ramparts of the last of the forts to be captured there (and during the last days of the war). One correspondent to the Pottsville Miner's Journal, reflected poignantly, "We accomplished our object, but when we look around for familiar faces, and look in vain for many, who a week ago were full of life and hope, we realize the cost of our expedition."

The Regiment then moved from Selma to Montgomery, capturing that city, with its stores, garrisons, and works; then to Columbus, Georgia, on the Chattahoochee river, where it captured an immense artillery park; thence on to Macon, GA, where on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April, after two days of fighting, it received the surrender of General Howell Cobb with over 9000 of his troops, 30 pieces of artillery, and other military material and supplies.

Thus closed the days of fighting. But here they stayed for four more months. Patrols were sent out daily, and especially so when word of Confederate President Jefferson Davis' flight from Richmond was received. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, 1865, Vale relates that "the Seventh Pennsylvania struck the trail of Davis and soon after dispersed the soldiers, capturing a wagon loaded with boxes marked 'ammunition,' such as musket cartridges were usually packed in... where they found that the boxes were filled with gold, and, constituting themselves each a disbursing officer for the defunct Confederacy, it did not take them long to make another division of this portion of the fund - each man taking as much as he could stow into his pockets, saddle-bags, haversack, and in some cases, his boots!" Most of this gold was from the CSA treasury, and had been carried away by the escaping Davis party. "Some days afterwards, the 'ammunition' having disappeared, the suspicions of the commanding officers were aroused, and a strict search of every man and horse belonging to the regiment being made suddenly, while it was on the march, all that could be found was taken from the boys and duly transferred...into the treasury of the United States."

On the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup>, while approaching the east side of Irwinville, about 90 miles south of Macon, the regiment learned that Davis had been captured in his camp by the Fourth Michigan cavalry, under Colonel Pritchard (who reported to Minty). The Davis party had been posing as traveling immigrants, but aroused suspicion because of their "twelve wagons, two ambulances, tents, and camp equipage, escorted by soldiers, and who moved so hastily as only to halt in the middle of the night long enough to feed!" When the camp was rushed at dawn, and as it was being secured, three women asked to go to the stream for water. One soldier noticed a nice pair of cavalry boots under the overcoat and shawl of one of the "women", and the disguise was quickly discovered. Davis was indignant at first, shouting, "I suppose you consider it bravery to charge a train of defenseless women and children, but it is theft, it is vandalism!" (Several participants recorded these exact words.) The former "traitor president" and his entourage were escorted back to Macon, paraded past the men on May 13th, and sent a few hours later under escort to Washington, D.C. While escorting Davis to Macon, Col. Pritchard first learned of the Assassination of President Lincoln. Additionally, there was an announced reward of \$100,000 for the capture of Davis, which reward was eventually received and divided up among all the men involved in the capture. For his command of this valiant Division, and the capture of Jefferson Davis, Minty was finally awarded a brevet (honorary) Brigadier General rank, as well as a brevet Major General rank, effective retroactively from March 13, 1865. Minty mustered out of the Military on August 15, 1865.

The war had been over for months, and the entire 7<sup>th</sup> PA Cavalry was mustered out on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1865, being the last cavalry regiment to leave Macon – having seen off all of their fellow Second division regiments before then. Peter Clark, however, was in the hospital when

this occurred, as were, according to the muster rolls, many other men of the Seventh. Also, the government allowed the men to purchase their sabers and carbines and almost all of them did so.

In November, 1897 a large stone monument was erected and dedicated to the Seventh Pennsylvania Cavalry by the surviving veterans. It is located at the Chickamauga battlefield, in Georgia, about one-half mile west of the Reed's bridge site, and just outside of the battlefield park entrance (on the north side of Reed's Bridge Road). It lies about two miles due east of the present park Visitors Center.

Following the war, the only things known about Clark are from the Pension records. Documents contained therein, mention that in 1871, he was working on a railroad in Massachusetts, when an accident occurred while moving rocks with a derrick. Clark broke his leg and as a result it healed 1-1/2 inches shorter than the other, crippling him with a limp for life. Later he moved to New Brunswick, NJ, where a fall from some stairs resulted in chronic and severe back pain, which along with a ruptured hernia, caused him to become totally disabled. His application for an invalid pension was finally approved in late 1892, but shortly thereafter he died – on February 19, 1893. His last known address was 239-1/2 Burnet St. He would have been about 59 years old, (but he believed he was 71). He is buried in Elmwood cemetery in New Brunswick. His death certificate stated his occupation as a "Hostler", or one who shoes and cares for horses, that he was 72, and that his place of death was "Albany St." There is no evidence that he ever had a wife or family of his own. Of his father and brother, he never heard another word, nor they of he.

In a final bit of ironic twist, when Joseph Vale compiled his book, which he published in 1886, he included an appendix of updated information for many of the principle officers and men of the old Brigade. For Robert H. G. Minty, the Michigan man and fearless old colonel, the present address was Ogden, Utah! Had Peter Clark followed, or taken the same footsteps as his old commander, General Minty, he would have ended up within about fifty miles of his own father and brother - and possibly been reunited with them again!

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Peter Clark was the son of my Great, Great, Great Grandparents Patrick & Mary Ward Clark:

/ → Peter Clark --|  
Patrick & Mary Clark → Michael Joseph Clark → Laura Penelope Clark → Laura Susannah Griffiths → Valeen Buttars → Rand Kirk Bitter  
↳ Margaret Clark --|

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Contact me if you would like a copy of this document in electronic format. I also have various representative photos, maps, books, and other reference material (some of which is listed below).

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Seventh Pennsylvania Cavalry Descendants Organization, Larry Fryer - Columbia, Maryland (See web site as follows)  
<http://hometown.aol.com/pa7cav/index.html>